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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT OF SPAIN 03405
FOR PGM/RC, AR
E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____
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EXCISE MARKINGS
REMARKS/LLE
EXCEPTIONS _____

1. MONDAY NOVEMBER 27 TRINIDAD EXPRESS PUBLISHED EDITORIAL COMMENTING ON GUYANA TRAGEDY UNDER HED "A SAD WEEK FOR GUYANA." EDITORIAL SAID "THE JONESTOWN HORROR PROVIDES A LESSON THAT GUYANA'S PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM AND ALL WHO THINK LIKE HIM SHOULD LEARN." EDITORIAL CONTINUED THAT "IT IS A LESSON, TOO, FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, WHICH LIKE BURNHAM'S IGNORED ALL THE WARNINGS, ALL THE DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE THAT SOMETHING WAS TERRIBLY WRONG AT JONESTOWN."
2. AFTER CITING "EVIDENCE" SUCH AS LETTER FROM CLAIRE BOUQUET OF SAN MATEO "FIVE MONTHS AGO" DESCRIBING DANGERS OF PEOPLE'S TEMPLE, EDITORIAL SAID GUYANESE AMBASSADOR HAD DESCRIBED ALLEGATIONS AS "WILDLY INACCURATE." EXPRESS CONTINUED THAT "THE FACT APPEARS TO BE THAT MR. BURNHAM AND HIS COLLEAGUES EITHER THROUGH IGNORANCE OR UNWILLINGNESS TO HEAR THE TRUTH ALLOWED THE SO-CALLED REV. JIM JONES TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER."
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3. UNDER SUBJECT "PRESS NOT FREE," EDITORIAL SAID "MR. REID (GOG DEPUTY PM) SAYS GUYANA IS A FREE COUNTRY. BUT EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THE GUYANESE PRESS IS NOT FREE AND IS OFFICIALLY THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPAGANDA ARM." EXPRESS CONTINUED THAT "A FREE PRESS NO DOUBT WOULD HAVE INVESTIGATED THE JONESTOWN RUMOURS AND COME UP WITH THE FACTS ON WHAT HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE THERE. BUT MUZZLED INTO ABJECT SURRENDER BY 'DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT COMMUNICATION' THEORIES, GUYANA'S RADIO AND NEWSPAPERS COULD SEE NO EVIL IN THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNE, COULD HEAR NO EVIL AND WOULD REPORT NO EVIL."
4. "WE DO NOT WISH TO RUB IT IN," EXPRESS SAID. "GUYANA IS GOING THROUGH A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE WHICH NO COUNTRY IN THIS REGION HAS HAD TO FACE.
"BUT IT TOOK PLACE PRECISELY BECAUSE MR. BURNHAM'S BRAND OF SOCIALISM HAS INSULATED HIS COUNTRY INSIDE A COCOON WOVEN OF IDEOLOGY, SLOGANEERING, RHETORIC, AND RAPE
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OF THE INFORMATION MEDIA."
5. SAME ISSUE EXPRESS CARRIED APPROXIMATELY 30-COL-INCH ARTICLE FROM ITS CORRESPONDENT, RIC MENTUS, UNDER BANNER HED "SEX AND SCANDAL IN THE JONESTOWN JUNGLE." ARTICLE SAID JONESTOWN EVENTS HAD AROUSED GUYANESE FROM THEIR "SURFACE APPEARANCE OF APATHY" AND "MANY WERE BEGINNING TO ASK OF THEMSELVES AND OF THE 70-ODD FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN THE COUNTRY, WHAT WAS BEHIND THE WHOLE JIM JONES AFFAIR." MENTUS SAID THAT "UNLIKE THE PEOPLE IN THE OTHER COUNTRIES SERVICED BY THE NEWS REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT IN GUYANA, THE GUYANESE PEOPLE SAW NO TELEVISION ACCOUNTS OF THE JONESTOWN DISASTER SINCE THE COUNTRY HAS NO TELEVISION."
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6. ARTICLE CONTINUED THAT "GUYANA'S OWN NEWS SERVICES, OWNED OR CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT, WERE WOEFULLY INADEQUATE TO THE TASK OF INFORMING THE PEOPLE OF WHAT MUST BE THE GREATEST TRAGEDY EVER TO OCCUR IN THAT COUNTRY SINCE SLAVERY."
"AND BECAUSE OF THAT TOTAL CONTROL OF THE MEDIA," STORY SAID, "(BY JANUARY NEXT, GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE OVER THE ONLY NON-STATE-OWNED VOICE LEFT IN THE COUNTRY) RADIO DEMERARA - THE GOVERNMENT MAY NOT HAVE TO ANSWER A NUMBER OF EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JIM JONES CONNECTION."
7. STORY SAID, HOWEVER, THAT GUYANESE JOURNALISTS HAVE NOW CONFIRMED THAT "THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE PROVIDED FEMALE COMPANIONSHIP FOR TOP-RANKING GUYANA GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BOTH IN GUYANA AND ABROAD." ARTICLE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT JONES HAD "MADE MOVIES AND TAPE RECORDING OF SEX SESSIONS BETWEEN TEMPLE WOMEN AND GUYANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS."
8. EXPRESS SUGGESTED THAT DESPITE ALL SUCH EVIDENCE, JONES AND PEOPLE'S TEMPLE WERE "HIGHLY ESTEEMED" BY GUYANESE GOVERNMENT. PAPER SAID PNC AND GOG "PLACED TEMPLE MEMBERS ON FIVE NATIONAL COMMITTEES -- TWO AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEES IN THE AREA WHERE THE COMMUNE WAS; THE LABOUR DAY COMMITTEE TO PLAN ACTIVITIES ON A NATIONAL LEVEL FOR THE CELEBRATION OF LABOUR DAY; AND THE NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE, ANOTHER NATIONAL BODY SET UP TO SUPERVISE RELIEF OPERATIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS."
9. EXPRESS ARTICLE FURTHER HINTED THAT TEMPLE HAD PLANNED TO USE GUYANA NATIONALISATION FOR SOME OF ITS MEMBERS TO AVOID TAXES. ARTICLE SAID "FIVE MEMBERS OF THE TEMPLE
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APPLIED ON APRIL 27 THIS YEAR FOR NATURALISATION, AND ACCORDING TO SOURCES IN GUYANA THEY WERE GRANTED NATURALISATION THE NEXT MONTH." THE REASON FOR THIS MOVE, PAPER SAID, "WAS THAT THE TEMPLE WANTED TO BE REGISTERED AS A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION IN GUYANA FOR TAX PURPOSES.

"THIS COULD ONLY BE DONE," PAPER EXPLAINED, "IF THE ORGANIZATION HAD FIVE GUYANESE AS TRUSTEES. SINCE THEY HAD NO GUYANESE IN THEIR MIDST, THE NATURALISATION MOVE WAS TAKEN TO MEET THE REQUIREMENT."

10. MENTUS' ARTICLE WAS FLANKED BY CANA REPORT, DATELINED GEORGETOWN, UNDER HED "REFLECTION OF MAD US LIFESTYLE -- PNC PAPER."

ARTICLE DESCRIBED CARTOON FROM PNC OFFICIAL ORGAN "NEW NATION" PICTURING HAND HOLDING BUTCHER'S KNIFE LABELLED "INTERNATIONAL CONSPIRACY" SLASHING YOUNG PLANT BEARING NAME "PEOPLE'S TEMPLE" WHILE BLOOD SPURTS FROM TRUNK. CANA STORY ALSO SAID NEW NATION HAD CHARGED THAT "MANY IN THE UNITED STATES HAD BEEN DETERMINED THAT THE TEMPLE'S JONESTOWN COMMUNE IN THE GUYANA JUNGLE SHOULD NOT SUCCEED."

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"THAT SO MANY PEOPLE SHOULD WANT TO LEAVE THE 'COMFORT' OF THE UNITED STATES AND COME AND SETTLE IN GUYANA'S HINTERLAND REFLECTED ADVERSELY ON THE 'MAD AMERICAN' WAY OF LIFE," NEW NATION WAS REPORTED AS SAYING.

CANA ARTICLE CONTINUED THAT THE "CATHOLIC STANDARD" HAD CARRIED SIMILAR COMMENT. CANA QUOTED STANDARD AS SAYING: "BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THE MEMBERS OF THE JONESTOWN COMMUNITY WERE IDEALISTIC PEOPLE ATTRACTED BY THE 'SOCIALISM' WHICH THE REV. JONES PREACHED. IN THE PERMISSIVE, CONFUSING AND MATERIALISTIC WORLD OF CALIFORNIA, THE RACIALLY MIXED, CARING COMMUNITY LIFE OFFERED BY THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE MUST HAVE EXERTED A POWERFUL ATTRACTION."

ARTICLE CONCLUDED BY REPORTING THAT "STANDARD" HAD JOINED "MIRROR" (OPPOSITION PPP ORGAN) IN "LAYING SOME OF THE BLAME" FOR LACK OF RATIONAL, PREVENTIVE ACTION TO OFFICIALDOM. "WHILE DELUSIONS AND HYSTERIA MAY HAVE GRIPPED THE MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S TEMPLE," STANDARD IS

QUOTED AS SAYING, "THE SAME CANNOT BE SAID OF THE UNITED STATES OR THE GUYANA GOVERNMENT."
11. SUNDAY EXPRESS CARRIED FRONT PAGE PHOTO OF BURNHAM AND JONES TOGETHER, SMILING, DURING "ONE OF JONES' VISITS TO THE COUNTRY WHEN PEOPLE'S TEMPLE WAS BEING SET UP." CAPTION ALSO MENTIONED "TRINIDAD-BORN LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA MERVYN DYMALLY (NOT IN PICTURE), WHO TWICE VISITED THE JONESTOWN SETTLEMENT AND PRAISED THE WORK BEING DONE THERE."
12. FYI/REMINDER: TRINIDAD GUARDIAN STILL NOT IN CIRCULATION DUE STRIKE-LOCKOUT. ASKEY